

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (<http://www.dailypbulletin.com>)

Department of Justice repays first responders \$500K for San Bernardino terror attack response

By Beau Yarbrough, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Monday, June 27, 2016



SAN BERNARDINO >> The U.S. Department of Justice is repaying the sheriff's, police and fire departments that responded to the [Dec. 2 terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center](#) \$500,000 for the extraordinary expenses incurred by the response.

"This is an important step forward for our region as it continues to recover, however, we have a long road ahead," Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-San Bernardino, is quoted as saying in a press release issued Monday announcing the funds.

Aguilar and Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Corona, [requested the funds](#) be made available as part of the Fiscal Year 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill on March 23.

"The first responders, who bravely went above the call of duty, must have the resources necessary to continue to protect our region," Calvert is quoted as saying in the press release from Aguilar's office. "I'm thankful the DOJ has rightfully awarded funding to support our law enforcement agencies and our region for their response to a federal responsibility."

The [\\$500,000 grant](#), which will be distributed by the California Board of State and Community Corrections, will be officially granted

Tuesday. It has not yet been determined how the money will be disbursed among the departments.

Local law enforcement leaders, including San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan and San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon, [visited Washington, D.C., in January](#), meeting with officials in an attempt to recoup the costs local agencies incurred responding to the attack. The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant was identified as one of the means of repayment.

"The initial reimbursement from DOJ is appreciated by the Sheriff's Department and the San Bernardino Police Department," McMahon is quoted as saying in the press release. "Congressman Aguilar and Congressman Calvert were instrumental in connecting us with the correct people and departments in Washington to start the cost recovery process."

The grant will be used to reimburse state and local agencies for overtime and regular salary costs related to the response by San Bernardino County law enforcement and other first responder agencies on Dec. 2.

According to San Bernardino County spokesman David Wert, local government agencies spent an estimated \$20 million on their response to the Dec. 2 attack.

San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

San Bernardino County welcomes city firefighters in ceremony

By Ryan Hagen, The Sun

Monday, June 27, 2016



SAN BERNARDINO >> The tone at Monday's ceremony to transfer authority from the city Fire Department to the county was careful and diplomatic.

Putting county fire in charge of fire and emergency medical responses was a good move for residents and employees, the officials holding the ceremony believe, but they were well aware of the delicateness of dissolving the 138-year-old city department.

"There's a lot of excitement, but there's a lot of apprehension as well," County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig told a room of officials before they went on stage. "We want to make them comfortable. They have a home and they have a family."

Mayor Carey Davis had a similar message in his two-minute statement to the employees.

"Our city's been well-served by our Fire Department, and this tugs at my heart to have to make the decision," Davis said. "Our council, our Board of Supervisors, recognize that in order to strengthen our community we needed to make that change. As difficult as it is. ... I'm truly looking forward to the time when we might enjoy a better delivery of service for our community and also better working conditions for our firefighters."

The management of the city department and the union representing city firefighters approved the transfer, which officially goes into effect Friday.

Two-thirds of the city's firefighters will transfer to other jobs in the county, [according to](#) City Fire Chief Tom Hannemann. An equal number of county employees will transfer to the city, where they will join the one-third of firefighters remaining in San Bernardino.

Residents shouldn't notice any change, said county Supervisor Josie Gonzales, whose district includes the city.

"When someone calls 911 and they need help, it is important that they feel no difference," Gonzales said.

In fact, officials expect service levels to increase, in addition to the city saving an estimated \$7 million to \$8 million per year — part of that coming through a [parcel tax of \\$148 per year](#).

After city and county officials spoke and gave commendations to city fire officials, firefighters lined up for barbecue provided by the county fire union.

Above them, two fire trucks — one with City of San Bernardino labels, the other labeled San Bernardino County Fire — had their ladders extended, working together to support a giant American flag.

Then the new engines, bearing both city and county branding, were unveiled.

San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

San Bernardino County supervisors to vote on banning rave-style events in Devore

By Joe Nelson, The Sun

Monday, June 27, 2016



After more than [three years of allowing rave-style events](#) at the San Manuel Amphitheater in Devore, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday will consider a ban on the events.

Supervisor Janice Rutherford is [proposing the county terminate its contract with Live Nation](#) given numerous complaints of noise by area residents, some living as far away as Crestline. Residents have also complained of trespassing on private property, public intoxication and lewd conduct.

Photo gallery: [Nocturnal Wonderland rave held in Devore in September 2015](#)

Cancelling the contract with Live Nation will impact the county financially. It receives \$1.4 million in rent for the venue, or 7.75 percent of the net ticket sales, whichever is greater, and Live Nation also leases additional space at Glen Helen Regional Park for camping during electronic dance show events. Additionally, it could hurt the county's negotiations with the concert promoter to manage the amphitheater, the largest outdoor amphitheater in the contiguous United States.

The county's contract with Live Nation, should the board vote to cancel it, would take effect Sept. 6, after the final Nocturnal Wonderland event occurring Labor Day weekend. That's because the contract precludes the county from canceling events that are already scheduled and where tickets have been sold, said Rutherford's communications director, Scott Vanhorse, on Monday.

"We simply didn't want to get into a contract dispute with Live Nation," Vanhorse said. "We will be working with Live Nation to make sure these events are as safe as possible."

That could be challenging.

Despite having 177 deputies working the inaugural Nocturnal Wonderland event in 2013, 73 people were arrested and a dozen attendees required medical aid, including Arrel Cochon, 22, of Hollywood, who died of an ecstasy overdose. At the Beyond Wonderland event in March 2015, John Hoang Dinh Vo, 22, of San Diego died of an ecstasy overdose after suffering a seizure at the venue, despite there being 216 sheriff's deputies working the event.

Electronic dance shows are synonymous with the use of the deadly drug ecstasy, which can cause seizures and death.

Photo gallery: [Rave fashion at Nocturnal Wonderland 2015 rave in Devore](#)

Most recently, [20-year-old Temecula resident Kenani Kaimuloa died last week](#) after suffering a seizure following the Electric Daisy Carnival in Las Vegas.

The problem is so common that in March, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors [adopted an ordinance](#) calling for the formation of a task force and a case-by-case threat assessment of events expected to draw 10,000 people or more on county property in unincorporated areas.

The L.A. County board's action followed the [overdose deaths of two teens](#) who attended the Hard Summer music festival at the Fairplex in Pomona last August. In April, the event promoters announced the Hard Summer festival would [move to unincorporated Fontana](#) with a summer rave scheduled July 30-31 at the Auto Club Speedway.

Live Nation has chosen to remain silent on the issue. Carrie Davis, head of corporate communications for Live Nation, did not respond to repeated telephone calls and an email Monday seeking comment.

The popular electronic dance shows were previously held at the National Orange Show Events Center in San Bernardino, where in September 2009, John Cramer, 23, of Canoga Park died of an ecstasy overdose while attending the Nocturnal Wonderland event.

Continued complaints of noise, loitering and vandalism at the NOS Events Center forced the city to shutter the electronic dance shows. So in 2013 the events moved to the San Manuel Amphitheater, where the complaints started all over again by local residents.

Karen Slobom, a Devore resident of 44 years who has been trying to get the county to end the electronic dance shows, said she was "ecstatic" to hear the news Monday, and said she can only hope the board votes to terminate its contract with Live Nation.

"If it goes that way, I would rejoice," Slobom said. "This place wasn't designed for that kind of event. I don't know if any place is."

She said she is concerned about the upcoming Nocturnal Wonderland event and the potential danger it poses, and that Live Nation is accountable for anything that does happen.

"They can say all they want that it's a zero tolerance drug atmosphere. That's an insult," Slobom said. "Live Nation knows what's going on at those events and they're completely responsible for those events."

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/government-and-politics/20160627/san-bernardino-county-supervisors-to-vote-on-banning-rave-style-events-in-devore>

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

7 children removed from 'uninhabitable' Twentynine Palms home

By Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Monday, June 27, 2016

TWENTYNINE PALMS >> Deputies removed seven children from what they call a cockroach-infested and feces-laden home in Twentynine Palms Saturday, officials said.

Danielle Reid, 31, and Arsenio Jones, 26, both of Twentynine Palms, were arrested on suspicion of felony child neglect, according to a San Bernardino County sheriff's news release. A third man, Brandon Brown, 31, also of Twentynine Palms, arrested on an active warrant.

Saturday night, deputies from the Morongo Basin Station stopped a vehicle near Hatch and Morongo roads, according to the release. The driver, later identified as Jones, was on probation and was driving on a suspended licence, sheriff's officials said. Brown, a passenger in the vehicle had an active warrant for his arrest.

Deputies then went to Jones' home in the 72600 Block of Foothill to conduct a probation search, officials said.

There deputies found Reid and her seven children, according to the release.

The conditions at the house were uninhabitable, sheriff's officials said. There was little food and water covered the floors from blocked plumbing, the release said. What appeared to be animal feces was on the bedroom floor where everyone slept. Trash was allegedly strewn all over and large rats ran around the garage and cockroaches infested several parts of the house.

The department of Children's and Family Services took custody of all seven children.

It's unclear if any of the children belonged to Jones. The relationship between Reid and Jones was not released.

Anyone with information regarding the investigation can call the Morongo Basin Station at 760-366-4175 or We-Tip at 1-800-78-CRIME.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160627/7-children-removed-from-uninhabitable-twentynine-palms-home>

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Deputies pull seven children from 'uninhabitable' home

Posted: Monday, June 27, 2016 10:27 am

TWENTYNINE PALMS — Seven children were removed from a home that investigators called uninhabitable Saturday night, June 25.

Investigators said there was virtually no food in the house and water covered the floors from blocked plumbing. What appeared to be animal feces was on the bedroom floor where everyone slept.

Trash was strewn all over, large rats ran around the garage and cockroaches infested several parts of the house, according to a news release from the Sheriff's Department.

The condition of the house was revealed in an investigation that began when deputies stopped a vehicle Saturday evening near Hatch Road and Morongo Road.

Arsenio Jones, 26, the driver of the vehicle, was found to be on felony probation for a narcotics offense and was driving on a suspended driver's license.

The passenger, Brandon Brown, 31, was wanted on an arrest warrant.

Deputies arrested Jones and Brown and took them to Jones' house in the 72600 block of Foothill Drive to search Jones' house.

There, deputies found 31-year-old Danielle Reid and her seven children living in conditions the Sheriff's Department called uninhabitable.

Jones and Reid were arrested on suspicion of felony child neglect and booked into the Morongo Basin Jail.

Bail for Reid was set at \$100,000.

Jones is being held without bail for allegedly violating his probation; he was sentenced to three years of probation in July 2015 after being convicted of manufacturing a controlled substance.

Brown was arrested on suspicion of possession of a controlled substance. He pleaded guilty on Monday, June 27, and was ordered to serve three years of probation and seek treatment for drug addiction.

The Department of Children's and Family Services took custody of all seven children.

Anyone with information about the investigation is asked to call the sheriff's station at (760) 366-4175 or We-Tip at (800) 782-7463.



By [Shea Johnson](#)

[Print Page](#)

June 27, 2016 2:58PM

City charter vote would precede election system change in Victorville

VICTORVILLE — The City Council could soon ask voters to decide in November whether to alter the city charter, a move that would be necessary if the city were to shift from an at-large to by-district election system.

After a public hearing on the matter last week, a second hearing has been scheduled July 19. Following that meeting, the Council will vote on whether to push the city charter amendment in front of voters during the general election. If the city electorate so chooses, a provision in the charter prohibiting by-district systems will be removed.

It's a step-by-step process that could ultimately lead to the Council voting to enact a by-district voting system in the wake of lawyer Robert Conaway's allegations in March that the city's at-large system violates the California Voting Rights Act and dilutes African-American influence. The 2002 Act sets out to rid any election structure that "impairs the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or its ability to influence the outcome of an election."

City spokeswoman Sue Jones said the city still has to receive the results of a demographic study being conducted by an outside agency.

"As it has not yet been determined if a district-type voting system is needed, and if so, how such districts will be drawn to properly guard against 'racially polarized voting,'" a city staff report said, "simply amending the City's Charter to remove all references to any specific election method will give the City the freedom to shape this process as the law may require."

If the Council does send the city charter matter to voters, it must be submitted to the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters by Aug. 12.

Nearly 200 jurisdictions across California have made the switch to by-district systems — some voluntarily before receiving legal challenges — rather than engage in costly litigation, according to National Demographics Corporation, an organization that assists clients in districting and redistricting.

At-large systems have also been challenged in Hesperia and Apple Valley, as well as Phelan, Hesperia and Apple Valley school districts.

With at-large elections, votes come from an entire populace. In by-district systems, voters elect a council member "from a corresponding geographical section of the city, called a district or ward," according to the National League of Cities.

Shea Johnson may be reached at 760-955-5368 or SJohnson@VVDailyPress.com. Follow him on Twitter at @DP_Shea.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/article/20160627/NEWS/160629737>

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Yucaipa breaks ground on Yucaipa Performing Arts Center

By Sandra Emerson, Redlands Daily Facts

Monday, June 27, 2016



YUCAIPA >> The city's vision for a center focused on the arts and community events will soon be realized.

City officials and the community gathered Monday to break ground on the Yucaipa Performing Arts Center, which will include a multipurpose performing arts venue seating up to 250, an outdoor stage/backstage facility and adjoining outdoor plaza.

"This represents another great example of how our community does come together on a common goal," Mayor Denise Hoyt said. "This was accomplished through a great deal of hard work as well as dedication and always with community input, detailed design and an emphasis on good project funding."

The 16,200-square-foot center at California Street and Acacia Avenue will be available for a variety of activities including community theater, concerts, dance, meetings, galas, arts-related classes and major events. The plans include office space, rehearsal space and a warming kitchen.

The center will sit on 2.7 acres in the heart of uptown.

"This is an example of our continued dedication and commitment to our historic uptown," Hoyt said.

In 2010, the city took a public facilities needs assessment survey to determine what future programs or facilities it should invest in. Residents identified a cultural and fine arts center as a priority.

The city sought input from members of community arts groups throughout the design phase of the project, making revisions based on their input.

These revisions included adding storage space, a drop-down projector screen and retractable seating, said Mayor Pro Tem Greg Bogh.

Bogh and Councilman Bobby Duncan formed a subcommittee tasked with working with the architect, John Sergio Fisher & Associates, on the design.

"Whenever we had any kind of concerns he was always open-minded and listened to everything we had to say," Bogh said.

The city has been saving up for the project over the past few years. The city also formed the Yucaipa Community Arts Foundation to assist in raising funds for the center.

"This is how we do business in the city of Yucaipa," Hoyt said. "We save. We plan and then we build."



ENVIRONMENT: Smog grips Southern California region

By DAVID DANELSKI

2016-06-27 17:16:27



Consider it a different kind of June gloom.

This month, instead of mostly cool, cloudy starts to our Southern California days, we've gotten a lot of sunny, hot and stagnant conditions – ideal for cooking up unhealthful air pollution.

And wildfires last week in Angeles National Forest near Duarte just made it worse.

This early start to smog season 2016 has given us only four days this month when ozone pollution didn't exceed the federal health standard somewhere in our ocean-to-mountains air basin, according to pollution data from the California Air Resources Board.

And that makes life difficult for people like Karen Jakpor of Riverside, whose chronic asthma took a turn for the worse starting about a week ago.

"With a string of the bad air days, I had to avoid outdoor activity and stay indoors," said Jakpor. "I also had to increase dosage of my steroid medication."

Despite her asthma flare-up, she flew to Boston on Friday to attend a wedding. But she never made it to the celebration. A sinus infection landed her in a hospital for a brief stay. Now she is worried about returning to the bad air in Southern California.

The short-term air pollution forecast doesn't look good.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District expects the air today to be unhealthful for all people in the Riverside, Perris Valley and San Bernardino areas.

And it is expected to be unhealthful today for more medically sensitive people in western San Bernardino County, the San Gabriel Valley, Lake Elsinore and Big Bear Lake areas.

The problem is that ozone pollution rises during hot, stagnant weather as it cooks up urban pollutants. Specifically, volatile organic compounds, such as industrial solvents, react with nitrogen dioxides from burning fuel to create the unstable gas.

Ozone irritates moist tissues, such as eyes and respiratory tracts. It causes nausea, headaches and burning eyes and triggers asthma attacks, among other health problems. It also has been linked in studies to early deaths.

But the news isn't all bad.

Ozone generally hits unhealthful levels in the later morning and afternoon hours.

That means air can be OK for running and other physical activity during the early morning and nighttime hours.

Michael John Stanley of Riverside is a competitive masters long-distance runner, who produces a weekly show

on YouTube for runners 35 and older called "Masters Running Revelations."

"I am not much for the morning, so I try to run at night, between 7 and 8," he said. "The only problem is it is a lot hotter than it is the morning."

Staff writer Anne Millerbernd contributed to this report.

Contact the writer: 951-368-9471 or ddanelski@pe.com

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RIVERSIDE COUNTY: Supervisors to discuss budget priorities

By JEFF HORSEMAN

2016-06-27 11:05:24



Riverside County supervisors will hold a special meeting at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 28 to discuss budget priorities and recommendations regarding the county budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

The \$5.4 billion budget comes as the county wrestles with how to pay for new, ongoing expenses, including raises guaranteed to employees in exchange for pension savings and an extra \$40 million a year that must be spent on jail inmate health care to satisfy a lawsuit settlement.

The meeting will be in the first-floor Board of Supervisors hearing room at the County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon St. in Riverside.

Contact the writer: 951-368-9547 or jhorseman@pe.com

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STAN SNIFF: Sheriff seeks budget stability

[STAN SNIFF](#)

2016-06-27 12:22:05

Consider some recent FBI numbers: Violent crime in 2015 rose by 18 percent in the unincorporated swaths of Riverside County, compared with 2014. Property crime climbed by 14 percent. And vehicle theft surged by 42 percent.

Residents' calls for service have spiked, and average response times have dipped.

These trends – driven partly by California policies that shifted some state inmates to county jails (AB 109) and reduced some felonies to misdemeanors (Prop. 47) – are not unique to this region. But in Riverside County, where costs now exceed tax receipts, the challenge to fund adequate law enforcement will continue.

To prevent the county from losing more ground to criminals, the Sheriff's Department proposes a status quo budget, starting July 1. The idea is to keep the same number of cops on the street as last year. To do that, the county will need to invest 10 percent more in sheriff's operations than it spent in 2015. Or, put another way: We need an additional \$30.4 million for exactly what we have now.

Why the price jump? The impact of wage increases from labor agreements still in effect, mainly. In recent years, pay raises were given to employees in departments countywide. Not only does every sheriff's deputy cost more with each wage increase, but the higher costs of personnel in other departments affect the sheriff's budget through the Internal Service Fund. This fund provides centralized services on a cost-reimbursement basis to other county departments – which is, in essence, the county charging itself.

In all, payroll now absorbs 90 percent of the sheriff's budget. And to curb those costs, the department can do only one thing: cut deputy patrols in unincorporated areas, either actively or through attrition. As it is, deputies are stretched lean over 7,300 square miles countywide.

The department can't trim patrols in cities that contract with the sheriff, because these partners, also pinched by labor agreements, pay their own way for specific service levels. The sheriff is likewise required by California and the courts to maintain required staffing in jails and courtrooms.

Elsewhere in the sheriff's budget, there is little left to purge. Remember, the department controls less than 10 percent of the operational budget, given labor contracts that set personnel costs. The sheriff's office will continue seeking efficiencies wherever possible – and work with consultant KPMG and the County Executive Office on further whittling expenses.

But visions of quick fixes should be tempered. First, the department has been implementing efficiencies since 2007 when the sheriff took office. The easy adjustments – along with some hard ones – were made long ago. And second, the efficiencies suggested by KPMG, including enhancing the department's communications systems, require large upfront investments by the county in order to reap longer-term savings. For now, county government has no money for such worthy projects.

The sheriff's office does defray costs through revenue sources such as grants, state funding for realignment, jail booking fees and proceeds from asset forfeiture. Thanks to these offsets, the sheriff has asked the county for just \$303 million of the \$714 million required to run the Sheriff's Department next year.

Meanwhile, some new costs dot the horizon.

One pending issue is the need, in future years, to boost patrols in unincorporated areas. When the county put more deputies on the street starting in 2009, crime rates plummeted and response times were shortened. A few years later, when the county pared patrols to save money, crime snapped back to higher levels.

Now, not only are crime rates rising, but county residents routinely request more visible patrols in their communities. The department's plan is to phase in the hiring of 14 to 15 new officers to bolster this protection countywide, at an eventual cost of \$2 million annually.

Another price tag in the pipeline: the cost of staffing a new jail in Indio. The 1,626-bed East County Detention Center, which will replace an aging 353-bed facility, is slated for completion in 2018. Operating just one phase of the jail will require at least 45 new positions, at a cost of \$4 million per year. And Riverside County, whose jail crowding forces the early release of 600 inmates per month, has an acute need for more beds.

While these costs do not affect today's spending plan, they bear close consideration. In fiscal year 2016, the department will pursue a status quo budget, work with KPMG toward savings on the margins, and embrace county efforts to control expenses wherever feasible. On the budget, the bottom line is this: Going forward, the more the county can save on labor costs, the stronger deputy patrols will become, the more jail space will hold criminals – and the safer the public will be.

Stan Sniff is the sheriff of Riverside County.

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Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (<http://www.dailypbulletin.com>)

\$28.7B LA County budget will add more social workers, sheriff's deputies

By City News Service

Monday, June 27, 2016

The Board of Supervisors Monday approved a \$28.7 billion budget to fund 2016-17 services ranging from housing the homeless and protecting vulnerable children to building new jails and enforcing a new minimum wage ordinance.

Higher property and sales taxes have put the county in a position to hire more social workers to reduce Department of Children and Family Services caseloads, and more coroner's personnel to address backlogs in that office.

Amendments to the budget included an increase in spending on the Parks After Dark program, aimed at keeping kids off the streets and out of gangs. More money also will be available for residents who might be able to reduce felony drug convictions to misdemeanors under Proposition 47.

Supervisor Hilda Solis applauded a plan to add more positions to the Sheriff's Department, beefing up patrols in unincorporated areas of the county.

Solis, who represents the First District, also introduced a motion Monday to formally establish environmental monitoring as one of the county's five highest priorities, in the wake of the Aliso Canyon gas leak in Porter Ranch, contamination wrought by the Exide and Quemetco battery recycling plants and the metals recycling facility that burned to the ground in Maywood. The motion passed unanimously.

URL: <http://www.dailypbulletin.com/government-and-politics/20160627/287b-la-county-budget-will-add-more-social-workers-sheriffs-deputies>

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LOCAL / L.A. Now

L.A. County supervisors adopt \$28.7-billion budget, adding more than 1,000 positions



County Chief Executive Sachi Hamai at Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting in July 2015 in Los Angeles. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

By **Abby Sewell**

JUNE 27, 2016, 1:44 PM

Los Angeles County supervisors voted unanimously Monday to adopt a \$28.7-billion budget for the fiscal year that begins on Friday, an increase of about \$500 million that adds more than 1,000 positions to the government workforce.

Many of those jobs are in the Department of Children and Family Services, with a goal of reducing caseloads. The agency is budgeted to get more than 400 additional positions, including 273 children's social workers. In December 2013, concerns over high case loads led social workers to go on strike for six days.

The new spending plan budget also adds 12 positions in the county medical examiner-coroner's office, which has been struggling with lengthy backlogs in autopsies and toxicology testing.

A civil grand jury report issued earlier this year said the office was "significantly understaffed in both coroner

investigator and laboratory positions, has a sobering backlog in toxicology testing" and was likely to lose its accreditation if those issues were not addressed. The coroner's office, which had asked for 80 additional positions in the coming fiscal year, was given only two in the initial budget proposal.

County Chief Executive Sachi Hamai ultimately recommended that the forensic laboratory staff be supplemented with five new positions to help reduce the analysis backlog and that seven investigator positions should be added.

"Our office will continue to work with the interim medical examiner-coroner to evaluate future staffing levels and when necessary make appropriate recommendations to the board," she wrote.

The county's former chief medical examiner-coroner, Dr. Mark Fajardo, abruptly announced his resignation in March, saying the department had not been given the resources it needed to do the job. Former longtime coroner Dr. Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran came out of retirement to take over the post while the county searches for a permanent replacement.

The budget adopted Monday also adds 123 positions to community programs run by the Department of Mental Health, 95 nursing staff positions, 20 animal care and control staff positions and 12 deputy sheriff positions needed to increase patrols in unincorporated areas.

The plan brings the total budgeted county workforce to 109,219.

This was the last budget adopted before the makeup of the supervisors' board shifts in December. Supervisors Michael D. Antonovich and Don Knabe, the two Republicans on the five-member board, are stepping down due to term limits. Their replacements will be selected in the November election.

abby.sewell@latimes.com

Twitter: [@sewella](#)

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LA Daily News (<http://www.dailynews.com>)

Former LA County Undersheriff Paul Tanaka sentenced to 5 years in prison

By Susan Abram, Los Angeles Daily News

Monday, June 27, 2016



Paul Tanaka, the former second-in-command in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, was sentenced Monday to five years in prison after he was found guilty of conspiracy and obstruction of justice in a jail abuse and corruption scandal.

Federal court judge Percy Anderson handed the sentence down in a packed downtown Los Angeles courtroom, where Tanaka .

Prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office had recommended that a federal court judge entence Tanaka to 60 months in prison, saying he fostered a culture that led to significant problems in the Los Angeles County jails.

But in court documents filed earlier, Tanaka's defense attorneys called the charges "patently ridiculous" and asked the judge to consider giving Tanaka probation time instead.

"Mr. Tanaka was a fearless executive in the department who fought to weed out problem deputies, not encourage them," attorneys H. Dean Steward and Jerome Haig wrote in their memo to the court, filed on June 16.

"The only culture he fostered was excellence, and he made daily efforts to accomplish it. Mr. Tanaka coddled no one in the Department."

Tanaka's attorneys added that their client was taking the fall for former Sheriff Lee Baca, who they said was calling the shots during an FBI investigation into county jail abuse.

Baca pleaded guilty in federal court in February to one count of lying to government investigators probing corruption and civil rights abuses by deputies in the county's downtown jails and an attempt by the Sheriff's Department to obstruct that investigation. The former sheriff had repeatedly denied his involvement.

Prosecutors are seeking a six-month sentence for Baca. Court documents confirmed last week that Baca is suffering from the early stage of Alzheimer's disease.

Tanaka joins nine other Sheriff's Department officials who have pleaded guilty or been convicted in the corruption scheme to thwart a federal investigation into civil rights violations in county jail.

URL: <http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20160627/former-la-county-undersheriff-paul-tanaka-sentenced-to-5-years-in-prison>

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LA County coroner's office lieutenant pleads no contest to harassment

By City News Service

Monday, June 27, 2016

A 46-year-old man who has worked for the Los Angeles County coroner's office for nearly 10 years and was accused by a co-worker of sending her obscene images pleaded no contest Monday to three counts of harassment by phone or other electronic communications.

Coroner's Lt. Ryan Hays was immediately sentenced to three months summary probation on the misdemeanor counts. The judge also issued a stay-away order requiring Hays to keep at least 100 yards away from the co-worker.

Hays was also ordered to seek mental health counseling and to refrain from any electronic communications of a sexual nature, according to a Superior Court official.

Other charges of sexual battery and indecent exposure were dismissed.

According to Hays' LinkedIn account, he has been a lieutenant at the Los Angeles County coroner's office since September 2014 and had begun serving as a deputy coroner in November 2006.

URL: <http://www.dailypbulletin.com/general-news/20160627/la-county-coroners-office-lieutenant-pleads-no-contest-to-harassment>

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By Staff reports

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June 21, 2016 8:50AM

Amy Pack hired as Desert Dispatch publisher

VICTORVILLE — GateHouse Media announced Monday that Amy Pack has been hired as publisher of the Daily Press and Desert Dispatch and associated weeklies and websites.

Pack succeeds Donnie Welch, who departed in early June to take a new position with The Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News in Salt Lake City to be closer to family.

"We're excited to have somebody not only with Amy's expertise in managing a community media organization but also somebody with her knowledge of Victorville and the surrounding areas," said Jason Taylor, president of GateHouse Western US Publishing Operations and GateHouse Live and Virtual Events. "I look to see Amy move the newspaper forward and also help the community."

Pack is not new to the role of publisher nor to the Daily Press. She served as president and publisher of the Visalia Times-Delta, Tulare Advance-Register and Salinas Californian from 2006 to 2013, and had been president and publisher of the Visalia and Tulare papers for 10 years previous to that. She also served as interim publisher of the Daily Press in 2014 and founded her own management consultant company earlier in 2014.

"I'm excited to return to the Victor Valley," Pack said. "We have a great team dedicated to a community full of opportunity. What a great situation to be a part of."



Daily Press/Desert Dispatch publisher
Amy Pack.

<http://www.desertdispatch.com/article/20160621/NEWS/160629983>

[Print Page](#)

San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

California regulations price middle class out of midlevel homes: Wendell Cox

By Wendell Cox

Tuesday, June 28, 2016



There is a serious housing affordability crisis in both California and San Bernardino County, and it goes beyond the intractable shortage of affordable housing for low-income households. As a result, middle-income households simply cannot afford middle-income houses. Much of the problem, as the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has concluded, has to do with overly restrictive land use and environmental regulation. The LAO estimates that houses cost approximately 150 percent more in California than the rest of the nation.

For 12 years I have co-authored the Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey, which covers more than 350 metropolitan areas in nine nations. Based on historical data, we rate housing affordability using a ratio called the Median Multiple, which divides the median house price by the median household income. Housing is affordable if it is 3.0 times (or less) household income. When the Median Multiple is above 5.0, housing is rated as severely unaffordable. Among virtually all of the severely unaffordable international markets (from Hong Kong to Sydney, Vancouver to the Inland Empire) there is prohibitive land use regulation. Likewise, housing is severely unaffordable in all five of California's metropolitan areas with more than 1 million population, including the Inland Empire which has a 5.2 median multiple, more than 60 percent above the affordable 3.0 median multiple.

Surprisingly, construction costs in California (labor and materials) are similar to other parts of the nation before you factor in government regulations. For example, a 2,000-square-foot home in San Jose (the least affordable metropolitan area in the United States) is only 9 percent higher in costs (before factoring in government regulations) than in Indianapolis (one of the most affordable metro areas). However, the growing affordability gap between California (ranked 49th in homeownership) and other states is due to severe restrictions and regulations on housing development, which drive land prices up just as gasoline prices rise when OPEC tightens supply.

Sadly, new starter homes, which begin as low as \$125,000 in other markets in the United States simply do not exist in San Bernardino County and most of California. Not surprisingly, many Californians are leaving. Since 2000, a net 1.75 million people have moved out of California to neighboring states with better housing affordability.

There are significant consequences to California's housing affordability crisis. California has the highest poverty rate in the nation when adjusted for housing costs (21.8 percent), greater than perennially high-poverty states such as Texas (15.9 percent) and Mississippi (15.3 percent). When adjusting for housing cost, San Bernardino County's poverty rate has ballooned to 19.5 percent, the fifth highest in the state.

There's also great economic opportunity by addressing California's housing shortage. According to the National Association of Home Builders' National Impact of Home Building model, building 1,000 average single-family homes generates 2,975 jobs and \$111.0 million in taxes and fees for all levels of government. Similarly, building 1,000 average rental apartments generates 1,133 jobs and \$42.4 million in taxes.

Some proposed solutions are simply hopeless. Jurisdictions are trying to provide more low-income housing through inclusionary zoning, which requires home builders to provide low-income housing to get permission for building market-rate housing. The LAO has noted that there is little potential to meet the affordable housing need through such draconian strategies. Moreover, the costs of these low-income units are added onto the price of the market-rate new housing.

The best hope for housing affordability relief is reform, both in land use regulation and environmental regulation, such as CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act). Local government also has a significant role in helping to address the growing housing shortage. A commitment by cities to ensure an efficient permit approval processes can reduce the costs associated with unnecessary delays. Cities, school districts and water districts should also carefully consider the impact on the local economy and poverty level before considering any fee increases for new housing.

California's affordability gap could worsen significantly if voters do not approve a new \$9 billion school bond measure this November. Failure to pass this vital bond could mark the end of a two-decade-long successful public/private partnership to fund new school facilities, and place the entire burden on aspiring homeowners. For example, if the school bond is not passed, local school fees could skyrocket upward to \$20,000 per home in San Bernardino County, adding to the \$40,000 in fees already paid for each new home. This outcome would only further intensify San Bernardino County's housing shortage, which is projected to reach 65,000 homes by 2019.

There are few, if any, domestic priorities above improving the standard of living and alleviating poverty by addressing the housing needs for our growing population. Yet, California's housing policies have done serious damage to the standard of living, while increasing poverty. Clearly, the time has come for elected leaders to make housing a top priority in the Golden State.

Wendell Cox is a senior fellow with the Center for Opportunity Urbanism and was appointed to three terms on the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission. He consults on housing and land use issues.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/opinion/20160628/california-regulations-price-middle-class-out-of-midlevel-homes-wendell-cox>

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LOCAL / L.A. Now

California has a lot more water than some think, new Stanford study suggests

By **Shelby Grad**

JUNE 27, 2016, 7:54 PM

Drought-stricken California might have a hidden water bonanza. A Stanford University study released Monday said the state has three times more groundwater located in deep aquifers than earlier estimated.

The research, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, said this water source is much deeper than traditional aquifers and that tapping it would likely require a lot of money and engineering expertise.

According to a Stanford news release, the water is 1,000 to 3,000 feet underground. Until recently it was considered difficult to retrieve water from that depth. The quality of the water is questionable, researchers said, noting that desalination might be required.

Overpumping groundwater in the Central Valley has caused the ground to sink in some areas, and researchers said this subsidence would need to be considered when drilling.

Still, the researchers said the findings offer potential good news as California enters a fifth year of drought.

"It's not often that you find a 'water windfall,' but we just did," study co-author Robert Jackson told Stanford News Service.

shelby.grad@latimes.com

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This article is related to: [Stanford University, California Drought](#)

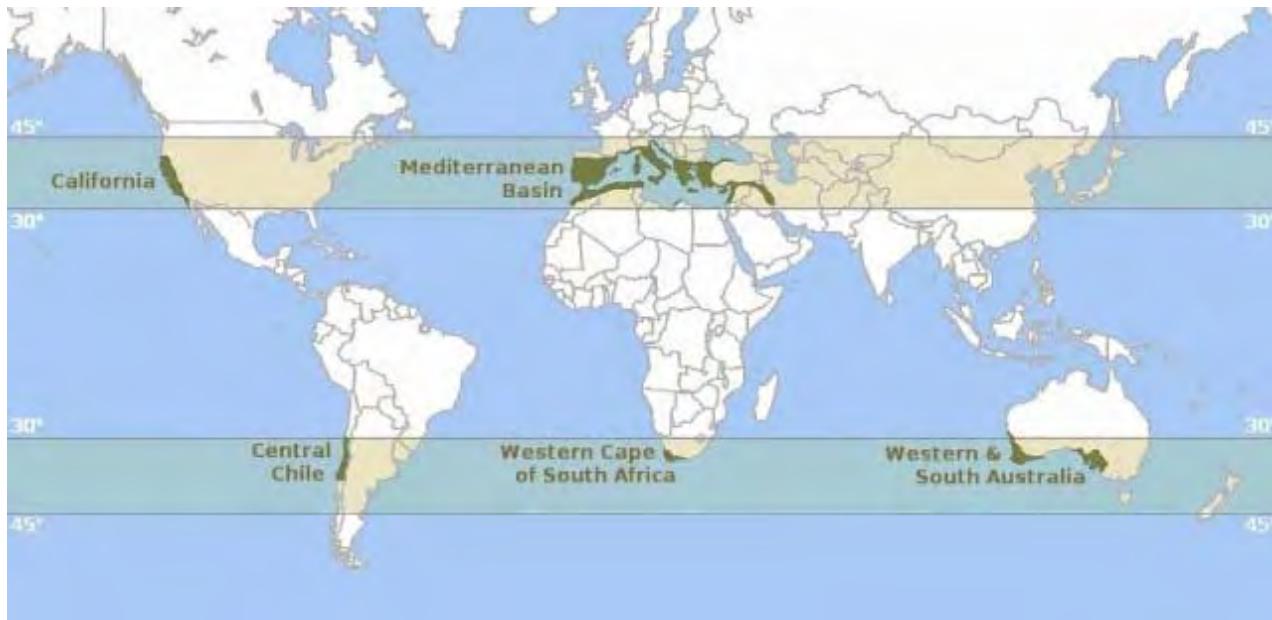
How bad is water management in California? - Capitol Weekly



by **JAY LUND** posted 06.27.2016

California's combination of climate, native ecosystems, and human uses makes water management inherently hard, unsatisfactory, and evolving. California is doomed to have difficult and controversial water problems. No matter how successful we are.

California is one of the few parts of the world with a Mediterranean climate (Figure 1). These climates tend to be dry (not much water), attractive places to live and farm (bringing high water demands), with mismatch between wetter winters and dry summer growing seasons. The scarce water supply in the wrong season for human activities makes human management of water problematic for native ecosystems.



Mediterranean climates are special places, socially, economically, and environmentally with unavoidably

challenging water problems.

California's ongoing drought has provided opportunities to scrutinize its water management. Droughts are trials that help identify problems and solutions. The current drought has prompted several water management innovations in California, including state efforts to require local groundwater management, tightening water rights administration, and increases in water prices and urban water conservation. Every drought is different, affecting a somewhat changed water system which serves a changing society, economy, and ecosystem. Droughts [historically](#) catalyze strategic changes in California's water management system.

If California is doomed to have hard water problems and unsatisfactory water solutions, how is California doing relative to other parts of the world blessed and burdened with Mediterranean climates. Table 1 roughly compares the world's regions with Mediterranean climates in terms of the population they support, economic wealth per capita, size of their agricultural economy, and (very roughly) condition of their native freshwater aquatic ecosystems.

As a person, native fish, or farmer, in which Mediterranean climate would you rather live?

Table 1. Comparison of Water Management Success for the World's Mediterranean Climates (Population and economic data from Wikipedia.com. Agricultural economy data from [FAO Statistical Pocketbook 2015](#). Ecosystem assessment is purely subjective.)

Country/ State	Population (millions)	Wealth (GDP PPP/person)	Food Production (\$ billion)	Native Freshwater Aquatic Ecosystem Condition
California	39	\$62,000	\$45	Struggling, much diminished
Algeria	39	\$13,000	\$8	Largely eliminated
Australia	24	\$68,000	\$25	Substantially eliminated
Chile	18	\$22,500	\$8	Substantially eliminated
Greece	11	\$26,000	\$6	Largely eliminated
Israel	8	\$36,000	\$3	Largely eliminated
Italy	61	\$35,600	\$29	Largely eliminated
Morocco	33	\$7,000	\$9	Largely eliminated
S. Africa	54	\$12,500	\$13	Struggling, much diminished
Spain	46	\$43,000	\$32	Largely eliminated

California is perhaps the world's best-performing region with a Mediterranean climate in terms of managing water for both humans and ecosystems. California can learn from other regions, but is certainly not a laggard

in terms of environmental and economic performance among Mediterranean climates. We do not do as well with water as we would like, and we must find ways to do better, but California nevertheless does relatively well in managing water.

This is not to encourage complacence, but to discourage panic. There seems little reason to support an overall revolution in most of California water management, despite ongoing needs to make substantial improvements. California always will need to pay attention to making improvements in how water is managed, to reduce the inherent dissatisfactions of a populous, prosperous, and agriculturally productive region with a dry Mediterranean climate. Organized and persistent attention with high but realistic expectations has been key to California's historical success and to continued change and progress.

Ed's Note: Jay Lund, a professor of civil and environmental engineering, is the director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis. This article, used by permission, [originally appeared](#) on the California WaterBlog.

NEWS

For three counties, vote-by-mail is only option



BY JOHN HOWARD POSTED 06.24.2016

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Increasingly, California voters use the mailbox, not the ballot box.

But in three of California's 58 counties — Plumas, Alpine and Sierra — there was no other choice but mail-in voting. And they like it that way.

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By the eve of California's June 7 primary election, at least 10.3 million absentee ballots had been mailed out to voters across California, representing well over half the total number of the state's nearly 18 million registered voters.

It's not known — yet — how many people who received those ballots actually voted, the secretary of state's office said. The official certification of the vote is scheduled to be released July 15.

[OPTION&BODY='HTTP://CAPITOLWEEKLY.NET/VOTER-](#)

But the trend toward more mail-in balloting has accelerated dramatically over the past 50 years. (<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/historical-absentee/>) Two years ago, nearly 70 percent of California voters used mail ballots in the June 2014 primary, a

In Sierra, Alpine and Plumas counties almost all the voters mailed in their ballots, except for a few who dropped off their ballots at a courthouse or county office.

non-presidential election year. In June 1966, fewer than 2 percent did.

It's unclear if there is a positive link between the use of mail-in ballots and the level of voter turnout — although advocates say a fundamental goal in encouraging mail balloting is to improve voter turnout.

But as mail-in balloting becomes more popular, issues arise, especially in counties with large populations.

Signature verification is labor intensive and takes time, and standards vary from county to county. In some counties, mail-in ballots carry first-class, pre-paid postage, in others no. Ballots may be placed in the wrong envelopes, or sent in unsigned, or sent late. In 2014, California had a rate of ballot rejection of 1 percent to 3 percent, high compared with many other states, said Kim Alexander of the California Voter Foundation.

"It's a good idea to get ballots to voters ahead of time, but we need to do a much better job getting them returned," Alexander said, "and there is a huge amount of confusion among voters." In Sacramento, for example, the registrar sent out letters to more than 900 voters who had submitted unsigned or flawed ballots, asking them to correct the ballots and return them. Nearly 480 did so.

The use of mail-in ballots is driven partly by cost savings, partly by convenience, partly by the wishes of the public and partly by topography and distance.

In the sparsely populated counties of Sierra, Alpine and Plumas, almost all the voters mailed in their ballots, except for a few who dropped off their envelopes with the completed ballots at a courthouse or county office.

Officials in the three counties said Election Night went smoothly.

In Plumas County, for the first time, voters cast ballots solely by mail in a presidential election.

In Sierra County, which approved all mail voting 11 years ago, people voted by mail for the third time in a presidential race. Some 84.9 percent of the county's 2,613 eligible voters are registered – the state's highest percentage after Nevada County.

And in Alpine County, the smallest of California's 58 counties with a population of about 1,160, some 717 of the county's 950 eligible voters were registered to vote on June 7, or about 75 percent.

"We were done counting by 10 p.m., " said Alpine County Clerk Teola Tremayne, who serves as the county's elections officer.

The use of mail-in ballots is driven partly by cost savings, partly by convenience, partly by the wishes of the public and partly by topography and distance. In rugged, rural counties with scattered pockets of population, maintaining convenient, well-staffed walk-in precincts can be difficult — and expensive.

"From my perspective, I thought it went real smoothly," said Debra Moore, the managing editor of the Plumas County News. "We didn't receive any letters to the editor that I can recall complaining." Some older voters experienced a sense of nostalgia because they missed being able to vote in person at a precinct, she added.

In this year's primary, Plumas County did a media blitz prior to the election to alert the voters about the mail-only primary.

Voter turnout often is higher in rural counties than in counties with large urban populations — although there are plenty of exceptions. (For a national discussion of rural vs. urban voting, [click here](#).

(http://www.ncsl.org/Documents/legismgt/elect/Canvass_Oct_2014_No_52.pdf)

But the larger question of whether turnout is affected by mail-in voting is still being debated.

"We have of course looked at it from an engagement perspective, whether it will increase turnout, and it's a bit of a mixed picture. Both Oregon and Washington have all vote by mail, and it increases the turnout of those who are already likely to vote," said Mindy Romero, of the California Civic Engagement Project at UC Davis.

"But you want to increase the turnout of everybody, and you want to make sure that with any type of reform you are not widening the gap. If you increase turnout, you want to do it across the board at the same rate," she said.

In 2012, about 59.2 percent of Sierra County's 2,247 registered voters actually cast ballots — the highest turnout in the state. Close behind was Alpine County, with participation from about 58.6 percent of that county's 813 registered voters. Both counties were entirely mail-in ballots.

In Sierra County, residents have been doing mail-in voting for 11 years.

In Plumas County, where about three-fourths of the electorate that year voted by mail, the turnout was about 50.9 percent of the county's 12,894 registered voters, according to figures from the state elections officer. The 2012 elections marked the first time that more than half the electorate used mail-in ballots.

By comparison, the turnout in June 2012 of registered voters in Los Angeles County, then home to 4.6 million registered voters, was 21.8 percent, the lowest in California: Nearly four out of five registered voters stayed home. In Alameda County, the turnout was 31.8 percent, and in Orange County, with more than 1.6 million registered voters, only about 26.5 percent bothered to cast ballots.

In this year's primary, Plumas County did a media blitz prior to the election to alert the voters about the mail-only primary. "We made sure that everybody knew what our plan was before we did it," said Clerk-Recorder Kathy Williams. "We did get feedback. Most said, 'Well it's about time you did that.' Some said, 'we're going to miss polling places' because it's a social event in a rural area."

But, she added, "it was better for everybody overall."

Some questions were raised, however.

Tracy Ingle, a politically active Greenville resident, said she was unaware until late in the election cycle that she would not be able to physically vote in a precinct.

"We are a rural county, and it's only fair and right to have a polling station," she said. She also felt there was a lack of information in the ballot materials sent out prior to the election about obtaining a crossover ballot.

"That part wasn't handled right. Our elections office has lots of integrity and there are checks and balances, but if they choose to go to mail only, they need to have the right information," Ingle said.

In Sierra County, residents have been doing mail-in voting for 11 years.

"We were reaching over 50 percent of permanent absentee voting," said County Clerk Heather Foster. "From a fiscal standpoint, it made sense to designate all of them (precincts) vote by mail, because we saved a lot of money."

When the proposal was first made to go mail-in only, "we did a poll and we had a real high percentage in favor of it. To this day, the majority of voters are in favor of it," she added.

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BUSINESS

Stores Accepting Food Stamps Face Stricter Rules

Proposal sets up fight between corner stores and big chains like Wal-Mart, Kroger over \$74 billion program



The U.S. Department of Agriculture wants to adopt rules that require stores redeeming food stamps to stock a wider variety of meats and vegetables and sell fewer hot meals, like pizza. *PHOTO: KEVIN HAGEN FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

By ANNIE GASPARRO and HEATHER HADDON

June 28, 2016 5:30 a.m. ET

U.S. regulators are pushing stricter rules for stores that accept food stamps, ultimately determining which retailers win and lose the billions of taxpayer dollars at stake.

The proposal is throwing gas stations and corner stores into a battle with giants like

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Kroger Co. over the \$74 billion Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

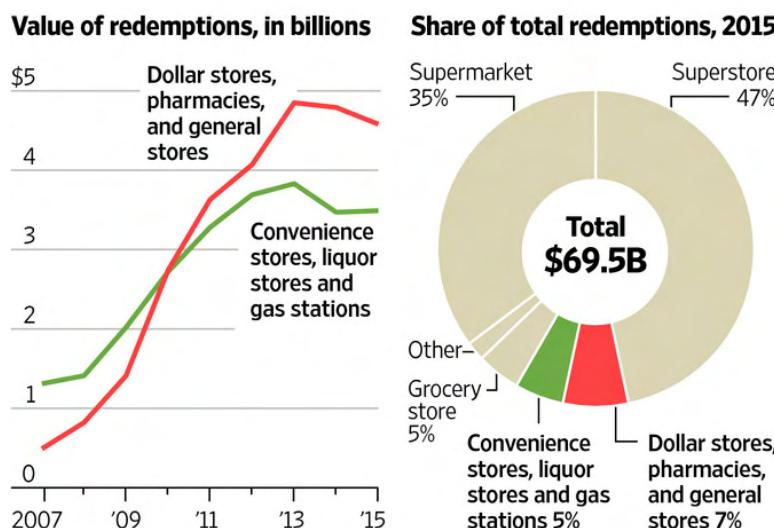
By year end, the U.S. Department of Agriculture wants to adopt rules that require stores redeeming food stamps to stock a wider variety of meats and vegetables and sell fewer hot meals, like pizza.

At a time when sales growth is hard to come by, redeeming food stamps is critical for grocers. Last year, SNAP funds comprised an average of 5.8% of sales at participating stores, according to a poll of 6,500 stores by the Food Marketing Institute, a trade group.

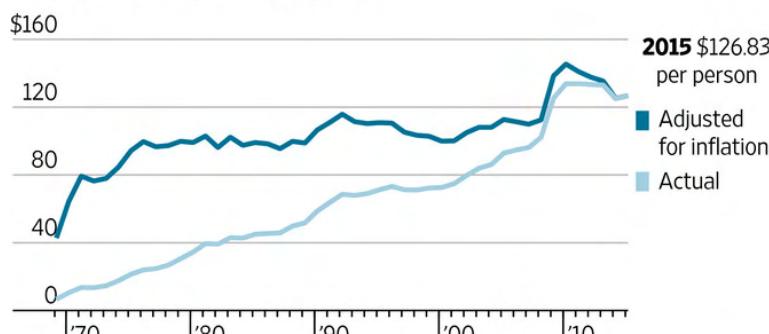
Big supermarket chains like Wal-Mart already happen to meet the tougher requirements because of their breadth of inventory. But some 195,000 smaller stores would have to add as many as 168 items to their shelves—a move they say would be costly and unprofitable, given their limited shelf space and spoilage issues for fresh food.

Food Fight

Convenience stores and liquor stores are increasing their share of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funds.



Average monthly benefits per person



Source: USDA

The new stocking requirements are challenging, said Noon's Food Stores, a chain of three in Missoula, Mont. "Unlike corporate grocery stores, or big-box stores like Wal-Mart that literally have acres of space under one roof, our stores are each around 2400 sq. ft. in total," President Dirk Cooper said in a letter to the USDA.

He said the proposed rules benefit large retailers by sending SNAP customers their way when small stores like his are forced out of the program.

The proposal has become a hotly contested debate, pitting Congress against the USDA, and prompting 1,257 letters from various stakeholders.

"We know that stores benefit from the revenue; that's important to us," said Kevin Concannon, USDA undersecretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, in an interview. "But we also believe that with the right to receive these taxpayer benefits for the food, that there ought to be just a basic minimum of healthy foods."

The USDA's proposal marks one of the biggest overhauls to SNAP in its 52-year history, aiming to increase access to healthy food for low-income people. It also represents the Obama administration's latest effort to influence eating habits, following an effective ban on trans fats and a requirement to break out added sugar on nutrition labels.

Nutrition advocates and groups such as the American Cancer Society support the USDA's proposed changes, but suggest implementing them with caution so as to not push stores out of the program.

More than 45 million people received SNAP funds last year, at an average of \$126.83 a month, up from three million people in 1969 receiving \$42.82, when adjusted for inflation. About 265,000 stores redeem those food stamps. From 2010 to 2015, the percentage redeemed at convenience stores, liquor stores, dollar stores, pharmacies and gas stations nearly doubled to reach 11.6%, or \$8 billion, of SNAP funds, according to USDA data.

"It troubles me when a place is de facto just a liquor store...and then I see EBT accepted here," Mr. Concannon said, referring to SNAP debit cards.

Al Patel, a manager at a Snappy Convenience Store in Chicago, said his customers use food stamps to buy chips and soda. Adding coolers with fresh meat probably won't change that. "We tried that a long time ago," but we didn't sell much, he said.

The USDA's proposal more than doubles the varieties of meats, dairy products, breads, and fruits and vegetables that SNAP retailers have to stock, requiring at least six of each item on shelves. The regulator also doesn't want prepared meals, like frozen dinners and canned soup, to count toward those minimums, though shoppers could still buy them with food stamps.

WSJ (<http://wsj.com>)

(<http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?title=Inconvenient Foods: Proposed>

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Inconvenient Foods: Proposed USDA Rules

Smaller stores such as conveniences stores and gas stations would need to increase their offerings of protein, dairy and bread products as well as fruits and vegetable offerings to accept food stamps, according to proposed USDA requirements. To reach the new minimums, regulators suggest stocking tofu and goats milk, which stores say people don't want to and can't afford to buy.

Search: Show

Product	Type	Minimum stocked
Dairy	Fresh cow's milk	6
-	-	-

The USDA suggests that stores add shrimp, lamb or tofu to reach the higher bar, but convenience store owners say those aren't foods their customers want—or can afford—to buy.

Going further, the USDA's proposal bars retailers from SNAP if they receive more than 15% of their sales from hot food or if a fast-food chain, like KFC or Subway, operates under the same roof. The goal is to prevent restaurants from redeeming food stamps, since the program is meant to help people buy groceries, Mr. Concannon said. But industry groups say it would force out thousands of SNAP retailers.

In all, the rule changes would cost small stores an average of \$540 the first year, and \$4,200 over the next 20 years, when adjusted for inflation, according to the National Association for Convenience and Fuel Retailing. The USDA doesn't have comparable estimates but says stores, on average, would need to stock 54 additional items—not the worst-case scenario of 168.

Wal-Mart hasn't taken a stance for or against the changes, but a spokesman said the company believes in providing families access to affordable, fresh foods. In 2013, Wal-Mart said it received about 18% of SNAP funds, which amounted to some \$14 billion, or 9% of its U.S. grocery sales.

When the government reduced SNAP funding nationwide a few years ago, retailers said it significantly hurt their sales. Kroger and other stores won't say how much SNAP

revenue they receive, and the USDA won't disclose that information. Kroger also owns convenience stores that it says would be negatively affected by the rules.

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proposed rules, which date back to the 2014 Farm Bill, are also getting a cold reception in Congress, where both houses are expected in coming weeks to vote on amendments that would block the most controversial aspects of the rules. An unusually bipartisan mix of lawmakers warn that if small stores stop accepting food stamps, many consumers won't have alternatives nearby. They say the USDA is overreaching its authority.

"This is the food police," said Ohio Republican Rep. Bob Gibbs.

Given the backlash, Mr. Concannon said the USDA plans to revise its proposed rules, particularly the highly contested parts, but is intent on pushing forward with the heart of it.

Write to Annie Gasparro at annie.gasparro@wsj.com and Heather Haddon at heather.haddon@wsj.com